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ACTION

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

(EXCL 11 REPRODUCED IN PBR)

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NO.

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC:MR

REVIEWED BY ECY DATE 2-20
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
FEB 17 1970

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: February 13, 1970.

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents,
January 1970

REF :

SUMMARY

A near halving of terrorist acts in Guatemala City during January accounted for the drop in the nationwide level which nonetheless remained above the upper limit of the "normal" 20-40 incident range (see Enclosure #1). The State of Precaution, extended December 31, lapsed January 15, but President Mendez was forced to re-impose it at the end of January. Tensions rose quickly in the wake of two kidnappings and two assassinations, prompting the new emergency decree. The Sunday morning removal of the top two National Police Directors, on February 1, and the installation of a new Minister of Government on the same day caused widespread speculation. In the North, the Army took steps to substantially augment its presence at a remote drilling site but has yet to run down an elusive band of guerrillas. And in Jalapa, five men were murdered in a string of incidents stemming from a land dispute--further evidence that violence is part of the warp and woof of rural Guatemalan life.

* * * *

1. The principal incidents bearing upon the internal security scene in Guatemala during January have been reported in the messages listed in Enclosure #2. Tensions increased from

Enclosures: all m.m.

1. Chart of Incidents
2. Index of Messages

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mid-month until early February, but the surge occurring at month's end somewhat receded when the first few days of February passed without major terrorist activity.

2. Careful reading of the press indicates that Leftist terrorists were active in three areas of the country -- northern Alta Verapaz, San Marcos and Guatemala City. In addition to the three San Marcos incidents reported in A-20, the last half of the month produced three more suspicious attacks. On January 22, three well-armed men gunned down Lorenzo RODAS Perez, and on January 29 "saboteurs" cut away strips of macadam across the main road leading into San Marcos. In addition, on January 27, a band of twenty men raided a cotton gin, attempted to ignite the bales and burned two spray planes. Although generally such an attack would be included on the Incident Chart, we learned that the owner of the mill has an unsavory reputation and had been near bankruptcy.

3. During January at least three times security forces took steps against groups which could be described as the "criminal Right." Rightist politicians have voiced no complaints or preoccupations about these incidents, either formally or informally, leading to the conclusion that they do not believe that the incidents form a pattern of persecution by security forces. Nonetheless, the events were interesting. On December 27, 1969, a group of men gunned down Charlota CORDON Estrada at Santa Rosalia, Zacapa. According to the press, she was a PR supporter who had lost her husband, son and a brother in an ambush about a year ago. Arrests seldom follow such attacks; this time, however, security forces detained seven men in connection with her slaying. On January 10, the leader of a band of three men was killed by Mobile Military Police while trying to evade a roadblock at Gualan, Zacapa. The three men were accused of feigning to be Judicial Police to conduct searches and stealing whatever struck their fancy. Earlier on the 10th, they had kidnapped and robbed a comisionado militar. Also on January 10, police arrested four people in connection with a series of fraud, robbery and bad check charges against the National Mortgage Bank. The band was linked to several leaders of the Mano Blanca (Raul Lorenzana - deceased; and Otto Thiel - exiled in Honduras) for whom they reportedly worked a few years ago.

4. Shootings involving land disputes often occur in rural Guatemala, but the facts rarely emerge in the press. Thus a number of mob-type killings are sometimes erroneously included on the Incident Chart as politically motivated vendettas. January provides a case in point. On January 3, one Jose

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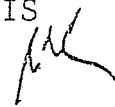
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Alberto ALARCON was ambushed by a group of men in the north-east Department of Jalapa. A follow-up story indicated that the killing was related to a land dispute and that Valentin PORTILLO Hernandez had been detained. On January 24, in the same village, San Manuel Chaparron, an assistant comisionado militar was ambushed and killed. His name was Rafael PORTILLO Hernandez. Next night, during his wake, three men, Manuel Antonio MARTINEZ, Manuel Vicente URRUTIA Morales (a student) and Rigoberto FIGUEROA Marroquin had a heated argument. Upon leaving a cantina later that evening, Figueroa was ambushed and killed. Later, unidentified men trapped and killed Martinez and Urrutia. Five deaths within a month are thus linked with this one dispute!

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Enclosure #2

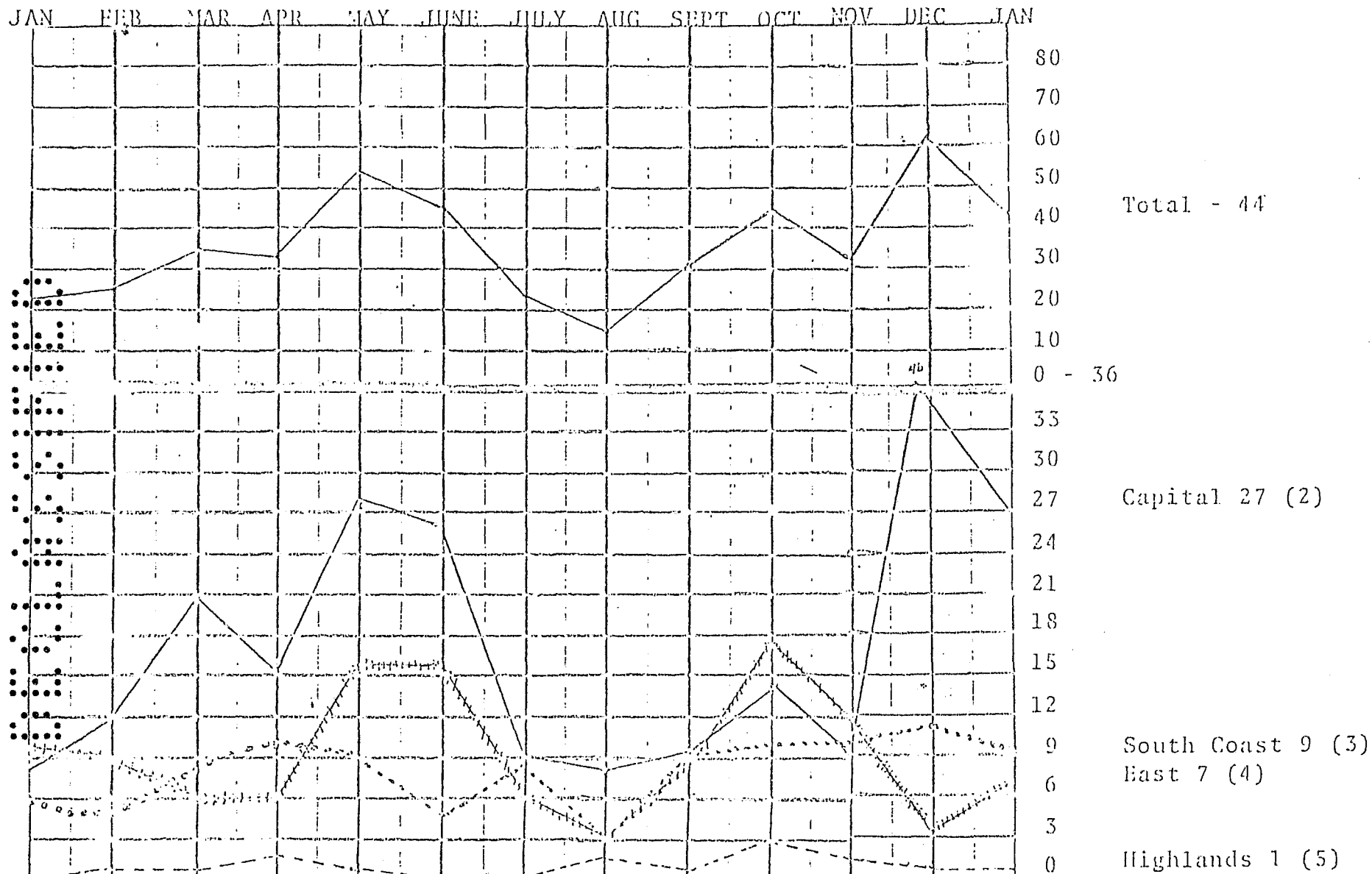
INTERNAL SECURITY BIBLIOGRAPHY
January 1970

DATE	NUMBER	SUBJECT
Jan. 3	- DAO-003	- Guerrillas
Jan. 5	- DAO-007	- Guerrillas
Jan. 6	- G-041	- Guerrillas: Press Accounts
Jan. 3	- DAO-0010	- Guerrillas
Jan. 9	- A-001	- Internal Security: Guerrillas
Jan. 13	- DAO-0012	- Guerrillas
Jan. 14	- DAO-0014	- Guerrillas
Jan. 16	- G-171	- State of Precaution
Jan. 16	- G-178	- Minister of Government Removed
Jan. 19	- G-134	- American School Robbery
Jan. 23	- A-20	- Minister of Government Removed
Jan. 23	- A-20	- Internal Security
Jan. 23	- G-248	- Guerrillas
Jan. 23	- G-303	- Leading Newsman Assassinated
Jan. 29	- DAO-0027	- Guerrillas
Jan. 30	- G-325	- Emergency Powers Again Invoked
Jan. 30	- G-326	- Retired Officer Assassinated
Feb. 3	- G-373	- Minister of Government Named; Police Chief Replaced

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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - January 1969 - January 1970



- (1) For purposes of this graph acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and assassinated bodies
- (2) Capital Area: Sacatepequez, Guatemala
- (3) South Coast: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
- (4) Eastern Region: Jutiapa, Jalapa, El Progreso, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal
- (5) Highlands: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Solola

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